



October 24, 2006

Re: WC Docket No. 06-74, Support for AT&T BellSouth Merger

Dear Commissioners:

As Director of the Mitchell County Chamber of Commerce, I am writing to urge expeditious approval of the BellSouth / AT&T merger. I know the factors that set communities apart and poise them for economic growth. Some of these factors include infrastructure, workforce, and increasingly access to broadband internet service. This merger will address one of the most critical needs required of any community seeking to grow its economy and new jobs – universal broadband Internet access.

The proposed AT&T / BellSouth merger could be the catalyst for dynamic economic change, especially in our rural communities. I understand, that as a proposed condition of the merger, AT&T and BellSouth have committed to deliver *affordable* and *universal* access to broadband, including; a new residential broadband offering set at \$10 per month, affording many rural communities a viable alternative to dial access; and a pledge to provide broadband Internet access to *all* residential living units in the AT&T / BellSouth service area, providing economic developers a necessary tool to recruit new economic development prospects to our rural communities.

The merger of these great American companies will significantly enhance the economic viability of the communities we serve. I ask you to approve the AT&T / BellSouth merger without further delay.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Shirley".

Shirley Hise
Executive Director
Mitchell County Chamber of Commerce